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will your
CHILD...

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**THIS WEEK
SELLS GOODS**

morning. My light wasn't on. I'm blind, you know."

"Yes, yes," Win said, feeling the knot loosen slightly. "That can wait. Tell me what happened."

"Two men were quarreling," the man continued. "I heard a blow. Then a man walked past my door. A little later I heard a man's voice raised in anger, say, 'You double-crosser, get a load of this!' Then I heard another blow, and something fell to the floor."

"I heard steps running past my door. I took the dog to guide me, and started for the police. I'd gone as far as the corner when an automobile drew up alongside and stopped, for the red light, I presume. I fumbled for the door catch and asked if they'd take me to the police station. The man asked me what I wanted, and, as soon as he spoke, I recognized the voice of the man I'd heard in the room next to mine!"

"That was where I made my mistake. I showed I recognized the voice. I turned away. For a minute Mimi didn't understand what I wanted. There were two men in the car. They got out and grabbed me, and the dog jumped in after me. After a while they threw out the dog. They took me here and..."

"Hurry," Win commanded, struggling with the knot. "I hear steps..." "This man explained he had to be here to keep an appointment. An alibi depended on it. He tried to make me talk. He intends to kill me, but he had to wait until after his appointment... the alibi..."

A door shivered open, disclosing a hallway filled with light, and the reflection of that light filled the room.

Dudley Lockhart, standing in the doorway, said, "What the hell's coming off here?" A tall, slender man reached past Lockhart and clicked on the light switch. Win Layton, blinking in the sudden glare of the lights, saw Ross Wilton standing behind the two men in the corridor, white-faced with surprise. She saw that Lockhart was holding a blue-steel automatic in his right hand. He pushed his way into the room.

Win Layton thought swiftly. There was only one hope. "Run, Ross!" she screamed. "Call officers! Lockhart murdered Fishback!"

Lockhart raised the automatic. Wilton was still standing in the hallway, his handsome face a picture of startled consternation. The tall, thin man was jerking a weapon from a shoulder holster. Lockhart, murder blazing from his beady eyes, was stiffening his hand on the trigger. And the dog, Win saw the dog go through the air, a tawny streak of motion. She saw the jaws clamp themselves on Lockhart's wrist, heard the roar of the automatic. Lockhart dropped his gun and screamed oaths. Ross Wilton turned to run. It was too late. The tall man whipped a gun from his shoulder holster and said to Wilton, "Freeze, Buddy!"

Wilton gave one startled glance over his shoulder, stumbled to a stop and pushed his hands high in the air. Dudley Lockhart struck the dog a heavy blow with his left fist. The animal dropped to the floor, crouched. Lockhart, staggering off balance, flung up his forearm as the dog scrambled to another rush.

Win dove for the gun Lockhart had dropped. She saw Lockhart's foot swing in an arc. His shoe barely missed her face, struck the biceps of her reaching arm. She felt a stab of pain, then the muscles were drained of strength, leaving her helpless arm only a limp, numbing ache. Lockhart's right forearm, interposed between the dog and his throat, caught the dog's slashing jaw, parried the rush. "Kill this damn dog, Slimmy!" Lockhart yelled.

The tall man swung his gun toward the dog. Win Layton screamed. "Ross! Rush him!" Hardly conscious of what she was doing, she crawled forward. "No! No!" she screamed. "Stop it! Don't kill that dog!"

The big police dog swung its weight downward, with a wrenching, twisting turn. Lockhart swayed to the side, then off-balance, crashed to the floor. The tall man jumped to one side so that he could get an unobstructed shot. Win saw a stabbing spurt of

flame leap from the gun. She shifted her eyes as she heard the pound of running feet.

Bert Grinnel, hatless, head lowered, came charging down the corridor. The man in the doorway saw him, raised his gun and took deliberate aim. Win flung out her right hand, caught the man's ankle, jerked with every bit of force at her command as two shots roared out above her head. She felt the man's leg shiver as something hit him with the force of a battering ram.

Dudley Lockhart gave a strangled cry for help as the dog, getting him on his back, slashed at his throat. He managed to twist far enough to avoid the first attack of the snapping jaws. Bert Grinnel, as calmly businesslike as though he had been lighting a cigarette, raised the barrel of the gun he had wrested from the grasp of the tall man, brought it down with a dull

Win watched the calm competence of his walk as he moved unhurriedly down the corridor. She heard him dial the number and say to "The Planet" operator, "Hi, Gertie. How's tricks? ... Atta girl ... I'll say you do. Give me the Old Man and stick a rewrite on the line. I've got some hot stuff coming in."

Three-thirty found Win and Bert seated with cigarettes and coffee, in the By-Line Café.

"Well," Bert said, "you'll have an easy time of it, writing up a human interest story on the blind guy and the devotion of the dog."

Win nodded. "What was the idea of dragging me out to the telephone and telling me to outline the article to the Old Man, Bert? That could have kept until we got to the office. The blind man was giving his inter-



Drawn by Von Riegen

"Thirty-five! Why, John, you know you were going seventy!"

thunk across the tall man's skull, grabbed the police dog's harness, looked up at Win and said calmly, "Hurt, Baby?"

"Just an arm kicked loose," she said. "Hold on to that dog. The blind man here knows the whole story."

Ross Wilton, walking as one in a dream, came over to help Grinnel hold the angered dog.

"How about it, Lockhart?" Grinnel asked, grinning. "Do you give it to us straight, or do I let this dog loose?"

Lockhart said, "Get that damned wolf away from me. We can square this."

The blind man, tugging at the knot Win had loosened, worked his arms free from the rope, sat up on the floor and said, "Down, Mimi. That's enough." The dog hesitated, then crouched obediently.

Win felt for broken bones in her left arm. Sensation was commencing to return to it with stabbing, shooting pains. "Broken?" Grinnel asked.

"I think not," she said.

Lockhart said, "Look here, we can square this thing. There's a wad of cash in my safe. All you have to do is listen to reason and..."

Grinnel turned to Wilton. "Can you hold this guy," he asked, "while I telephone my newspaper and get the story in before they put the paper to bed?"

Win spoke before Wilton could answer. "The answer to that, Bert," she said, "is no!"

"Meaning..." Grinnel asked.

"Meaning he can't," she said.

Wilton said, "Oh, I say. Aren't you...?"

Calmly, methodically, Grinnel raised the gun, cracked it down on Lockhart's head. As Lockhart went limp, Grinnel shoved the butt of the gun in Win's hand and said, "The phone's down the corridor. You keep the situation in hand, Baby."

view. The Old Man didn't want my story."

Grinnel grinned and said, "My gosh, Baby, you're innocent!"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you see, I tracked Ross Wilton to the Arlington Hotel," Grinnel said. "I got there just after you'd left. Judge Koomes and Patricia were there. I made the Judge kick through with his story. When they told me where you'd gone, I chased out after you."

"That still doesn't answer my question."

"You forget," he told her, "that I knew about Patricia and about the letters and stuff Fishback had. Fishback had been doublecrossing Lockhart. Lockhart was hiding in Fishback's room while Judge Koomes was there. When he saw what a perfect set-up he had for murder, he stuck the knife in Fishback, short-circuited the light current so as to blow out all the fuses, so he wouldn't be seen leaving the dump, grabbed Fishback's blackmail stuff and walked out."

"So... Aw, shucks, Baby. I wanted to leave Ross Wilton alone in the room with Lockhart."

"You mean so he'd get those letters?" Win asked.

"Sure," he said.

Win laughed. "Why didn't you say so in the first place? Good heavens, I'd got Judge Koomes' note and Patricia's letters out of Lockhart's pocket before you'd said more than a dozen words over the telephone. I told Wilton to search Slimmy for another gun. While he was doing it, he had his back to me, and I frisked Lockhart."

Grinnel grinned silent approval. Win met his eyes. "Wilton didn't do so well when the going got rough," she said.

Grinnel shifted his gaze. "Aw, give him time," he said. "He isn't used to the rough stuff."

Win said deliberately, "He has his good points. He's a divine dancer... I hope Patricia Koomes is happy with him."

Grinnel stiffened to attention, started to say something, then slumped back down in his chair. Cigarette ashes spilled on his vest. "Patricia Koomes, huh?" he asked.

Win nodded, her eyes, starry, fixed on Grinnel.

"Well," Bert said slowly, "you're going to do better than that. You're going to have friends who..."

Win interrupted, "Who talk my language?"

"Not newspaper men," Grinnel protested, straightening in his seat. "That's a nutty profession. A newspaper man couldn't..."

Under the steady impact of her eyes he became silent, twisted in his seat, yelled, "Hey, waiter, two more coffees." He slumped back in the chair, the cigarette dangling dejectedly from his lips. "You're going to go places, Baby," he told her. "You're going into the movies. You'll have automobiles, fur coats, butlers, swank, money..."

Win leaned across the table, placed her hand over his. "And how about you, Bert? What are you going to have?"

He avoided her eyes. "Just a job," he said, "a job that calls for hard work long hours, fast thinking, and doesn't pay enough money to..."

Win opened her purse, took out an oblong of cardboard and ripped it into fragments. "All right, Bert," she said, "that was my studio pass for the screen test. Drag me up there by the hair if you want to, but let's see you get me into that studio without a pass!"

At that moment, Harry Fenton of "The Sentinel," pushed through the door, and, with a whoop of delight came striding toward their table. "Hi, you two!" he shouted boisterously. "Gosh, Bert—what's the matter? Got a blood pressure or something? Your face looks like a lobster. And you, Win... My gosh, you're beautiful! You look as though you'd been seeing a vision or sumpin'."

The waiter appeared with two cups of coffee. Win looked up at Fenton and said softly, "Perhaps I have."

The End



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